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BLIP™

The Video Games Magazine

TV Star
Matthew
Laborteaux

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Issue No. 1
February, 1983

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BLIP

The Video Games Magazine

Here it is, gang — Vol. 1, No. 1 of BLIP. You're holding in your hands the most fun-packed — and fact-packed — video games magazine you'll find anywhere.

If you're into video games, you're going to love BLIP. If you aren't, take a peek anyway. You just might get hooked.

On the last page, you get a chance to tell us what you think of this issue — and to win your choice of three valuable prizes. After you've read BLIP, answer our questions and send the page to us. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

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★ ★ ★

VIDEO GAMES OF THE STARS

BLIP went to Hollywood to talk with some young stars about video games. Here are some of the things they told us.



Matthew Laborieux

"I like TRON a lot," said Matthew Laborieux, co-star of TV's *Little House on the Prairie*. That's why it was easy to get him to pose for the cover shot of our first issue.

"TRON has levels that make it different from any other game on the market," he said. "That's what makes it unique — and exciting.

But TRON is only one of Matthew's favorite games. "I really, *really* like PAC-MAN," he said. "MISSILE COMMAND is another favorite. Then there's DIG DUG. Not to mention CENTIPEDE and DEFENDER."

At this point, we began to get the picture. Matthew has so many

"favorite" games that he won't be tied down to just one. So we asked him about video games in general.

"I like games that give me a challenge," he said. "I like to see how long it takes for me to master them.

"I guess most of us want to conquer something. Video games give me a chance to do that in a harmless way."

When it comes to conquering, Matthew knows what he's talking about. He's already been in several national video game tournaments.

"Last year, I went to Chicago for the CENTIPEDE championships," he said. "I finished fourth in the beginning tournaments, and tenth in the finals."

Not bad, when you consider that thousands of players were involved.

★ ★ ★

★ ★ ★



Grant Cramer

"PAC-MAN is one of my all-time favorites," Grant Cramer told BLIP. "I play it whenever I can, especially on location for a movie or a TV show. You have a lot of spare time on a set, and I usually wander off to the nearest arcade."

Grant also likes ASTEROIDS. "It's a real game of defense," he said. "You have to protect yourself at all costs. It gives me a sense of adventure that I don't get from PAC-MAN."

★ ★ ★



Randall Brooks

Randall Brooks started playing video games when she played the title role in *Annie* on Broadway. There was a SPACE INVADERS game in a restaurant across the street from the theater.

"There wasn't a lot for a kid to do between shows," she said. "So I spent a lot of time with SPACE INVADERS. In fact, most of the people in the cast did."

Randall says she's always looking for new games to try out. "I may not ever find one to compare with SPACE INVADERS. But how could anything ever compare to being a Broadway star either?"

VIDEO GAMES OF THE STARS

★ ★ ★

Bruce Boxleitner is one of the few people who know something about being literally "into" video games. He had a leading role in *Tron*, last summer's Disney movie about a character who gets drawn into a video game and then has to fight for his life.

"I arrived at the Disney studios," Bruce said, "and found five arcade games on the set. We had PAC-MAN, ASTEROIDS, MISSILE COMMAND, SPACE INVADERS and CENTIPEDE. We played them during breaks in the shooting, and I got hooked on every one of them."

The games helped Bruce and other cast members get into the right frame of mind for the movie they were making. "As we played," Bruce told BLIP, "We imagined being inside the game and part of the action on the screen. That made each game even more fascinating."



Bruce Boxleitner

★ ★ ★



David Wallace

"No game is as much fun for me as ZAXXON," David Wallace told us. David is a regular in TV's *Facts of Life*. "It's a real fantasy trip for me. I get off into my own little world."

"The element of danger in ZAXXON is thrilling. After all, you're trying to weave your way through an obstacle course — and you could be obliterated at any second. And when you finish a game like ZAXXON, you come away with a real feeling of exhilaration!"

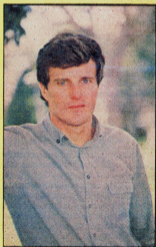
★ ★ ★

"Life is full of challenges," said Nicholas Hammond. "A game that makes you work to win is a game that's true-to-life. And that's what I think most video games have going for them.

"I used to play Spider-Man on the TV series, so I'm looking forward to trying my hand at the Spider-Man cartridge. In fact, I'd be willing to give just about any video game a try.

"I just enjoy video games, that's all. I'm certainly not an addict, but the games amuse me, they delight me, they challenge me. What more could anyone ask of games?"

Nicholas gets even more excited when he talks about the future of video games. "We've only had them for a short while, and look at how far they've progressed. Just think of what the geniuses who create them might be capable of as the technology improves!"



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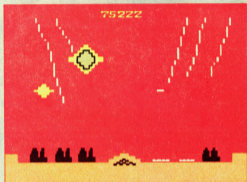
63-56 108th Dept. 128P Forest Hills, New York 11375

BLIP TIPS I

Every issue of *BLIP* will include tips on how to improve your scores with video games. Our home game this month is *MISSILE COMMAND*. On page 8, you'll find tips for an arcade game.

Our *BLIP TIPS* writer is George Sullivan, author of *How to Beat the Video Games*, published by Scholastic Books.

MISSILE COMMAND is no *PAC-MAN* or *DONKEY KONG*. There's nothing coy or playful about it. You'll face wave after wave of attacking bombers and exploding missiles. It's World War III, right on your screen. Ready to play? Get to your bunker!



OBJECTIVE

The Krytolians have launched a missile attack on the peace-loving planet of Zardon. As the commander of the Zardonian defenses, you must launch a counter-attack with your antiballistic missiles (ABMs), protecting six cities.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Your ABM base is in the midst of the cities you're trying to protect. The enemy missiles appear at the top of the screen and swoop downward toward the cities, leaving fiery tails behind them.

You also have to deal with enemy smart bombs (sometimes called "cruise

missiles"). They can avoid your missile explosions and make their way to the cities at the bottom of the screen.

For each board, you get three sets of 10 ABMs. As soon as you use up one set of 10, the next set is supplied automatically.

CONTROLS

Your joystick moves a cursor on the screen in eight different directions. The cursor shows where the ABM will explode. Get the cursor where you want it, and press the FIRE button. As the game goes on, enemy missiles appear at a faster and faster rate. That makes it more and more difficult to place the cursor exactly where you want before firing an ABM.

This suggests a basic, overall strategy. *Keep the cursor moving, and fire at the targets as you pass them by.* What you don't want to do is stop and fire. Your cities wouldn't last long enough for you to take a deep breath.

TACTICS

- Learn to lead the enemy missiles with your cursor, exploding ABMs ahead of the path the missiles will take. It's the same technique a quarterback uses when throwing to a fast-moving receiver.

- Remember that you can't have more than three ABMs on the screen at one time. Try to launch a fourth, and you'll hear a beeping sound. Then you'll have to wait until one of your ABMs explodes or dies out. Learn to space your shots, so you're not forced to hear that beep and watch a city being destroyed.

- Once you get to Wave 7, enemy missiles and bombs come so fast that you can't pick them off one by one. That calls for a technique called "laying a carpet."

Get the cursor just below the center of the screen, a bit to the left of the city you're protecting. Sweep the cursor from left to right above the city, and fire three ABMs. The three explosions should form one huge cloud that will destroy the on-coming missiles.

- Each wave includes a fixed number of missiles and bombs. Knowing the numbers in advance can help you use your missiles more efficiently. Here's a wave-by-wave breakdown:

Wave	Missiles	Bombs	Wave	Missiles	Bombs
1	12	0	9	13	3
2	15	0	10	16	4
3	18	0	11	19	4
4	12	0	12	12	5
5	16	0	13	14	5
6	14	1	14	16	6
7	17	1	15	18	6
8	10	2	16	20	7

- Don't think that the number of missiles and bombs tells you how tough a

wave is. The speed at which they travel is an important factor, and that speed increases with each wave. The Atari instruction booklet says, "Wave 13 is the most difficult wave in the Game Program Cartridge." But waves 14, 15, and 16 are pretty mean, too.

- When you see that there's no way to avoid losing a city, you have to decide which one to give up. Sacrifice one of the cities at the outer edge of the screen. At all costs, protect the cities next to the missile base, because the base gets destroyed with them.

- In later rounds, do everything you can to conserve ABMs. If you use up all 30 missiles, you'll have nothing to do but sit and watch your cities being demolished.

GAME VARIATIONS

There are 34 different MISSILE COMMAND options. Naturally, you should start with the easier options. Then you can increase the degree of difficulty as you begin to show improvement.

One of your options is to vary the speed of the cursor. But keep this in mind: When you increase the cursor's speed, you diminish its accuracy.

You can vary the speed of the enemy attacks, beginning the game at wave 7 or wave 11. You can even begin as high as wave 15.

Finally, you have the difficulty switch on the Atari console itself. The position of this switch determines how fast your ABMs move. As with other Atari games, it's possible to set this switch separately for each player. That allows you to equalize competition between an experienced player and a newer one.

NEXT MONTH:

BASKETBALL

BLIP TIPS II

CENTIPEDE

If you go to arcades for fast-moving games with plenty of action, **CENTIPEDE** is for you. You don't get a second to relax with this game. Even so, you can learn to keep **CENTIPEDE** going for a longer time on one quarter than most other games.

OBJECTIVE

Your deadly enemies are centipedes, spiders, fleas, and scorpions. The idea is to stay alive by avoiding contact with any of these insects, and to score points by shooting and destroying them.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

The game begins with a centipede at the top of the screen. The creature has a head and 11 body segments. It begins moving downward, row by row, through a field of mushrooms. Your job is to destroy the centipede by firing at the head and the body segments.

CONTROLS

On the right side of the control panel, there's a trak ball – a plastic sphere about the size of a tennis ball. It's partially recessed into the panel. The gun you fire moves in whichever direction you move the ball.

On the left side of the panel, there's a FIRE button. Press it and the gun shoots upward.



TACTICS

- To destroy the centipede, you must be able to move your gun fast and fire it rapidly and accurately. Learn to use the middle part of your fingers, not just your fingertips, in spinning and stopping the trak ball. This gives you greater control. Never look down at the trak ball to see what your fingers are doing. Keep your eyes glued to the screen instead. Watch the gun, the centipedes, and your other enemies.

- Although the gun fires only one missile at a time, you can get a rapid-fire effect by holding the FIRE button down. That way, a missile is fired each time a previous missile reaches its target or the top of the screen.

But rapid-fire isn't always recommended. It's usually best to keep tapping the FIRE button instead of holding it down. With rapid-fire, you could get into a situation where you must fire – and can't. Nothing could be worse than that.

- When you hit a centipede head, the

head becomes a mushroom. The body segment behind the head becomes a new head. When you hit a body segment, the centipede splits into two centipedes, and each darts off in a different direction.

So, don't shoot at the centipede haphazardly. The screen will come alive with heads and body segments, and you'll be wiped out fast.

The trick is to get your gun below the spot where the centipede is about to turn. Then, when the head is directly above your gun, blast away with rapid-fire. The head will turn into a mushroom and be destroyed. And you'll hit each body segment as it makes the same turn.

- Keep the lower part of the screen free of mushrooms. Not only do mushrooms attract the centipede, but they can block your shots. It takes four shots to destroy a mushroom. The closer you get to a mushroom, the faster the missile does its job, and the quicker you can move to the next mushroom.

- Watch out for spiders. When one comes bouncing toward you, you can avoid it by sliding over to where it was previously. It will drift off the screen without doing any harm. Or, if the spider is a good distance away from your gun, and you're going for points, shoot it down.

- You'll begin meeting fleas in the second round. Each one plummets straight down the top of the screen. Avoid each flea by simply moving to the right or left. If you want to try destroying a flea, be sure it's near the top of the screen when you open fire. It takes two shots to bring one down.

- Scorpions begin showing up in the fourth round. Each one travels across the screen on a straight line from left to right, not far from the top. They are usually not in the range of your gun. The scorpion poisons every mushroom it touches. When the centipede touches a poisoned mushroom, it begins dropping crazily toward the bottom of the screen. You can use this turn of events to your

advantage by positioning your gun just below the centipede as it begins to descend, and picking off the head and body segments one by one.

- Separate, distinctive sounds signal the approach of a spider, a flea or a scorpion. If you learn to recognize these sounds, you'll never be surprised when one of these creatures pops onto the screen.

- Always be cool. This applies especially in the later boards when the centipede almost never fails to reach the bottom of the screen. What you must do is position your gun in the bottom row and keep it there. The centipede can't invade the bottom row. It stops at the next-to-the-bottom row, crosses that row, and then starts its upward trek. So stay off the bottom row, picking off heads and body segments as they go by.

- During the first board, there is only one centipede. But, board by board, the game becomes more difficult. On the second board, there are two centipedes, three on the third, up to 12 centipedes on the twelfth board.

By this time, everything has also speeded up. The spider is bouncing like a rubber ball and is far more dangerous. Fleas rain down from above. Mushrooms cover the board. At this stage, your strategy should be to keep open just one vertical lane through the mushrooms. Position your gun under that lane, and zap any centipede that enters it.

Beginners should be able to score up to 3,000 points in CENTIPEDE. Good players can aim for up to 50,000 points.

And then there's Joseof Rijanto. On April 4, 1982, at the Captain Video Arcade in Los Angeles, he racked up a record score of 4,421,232 points.

NEXT MONTH:

DONKEY KONG

VIDEO HALL OF FAME



Baseball has its batting averages, its RBIs, and its earned-run averages. Football has statistics for running, passing, kicking and just about anything else that happens on the field. Even TV is ruled by ratings numbers.

Statistics are as American as apple pie and pizza. And now statistics have burst upon the video game scene.

There's a man in Ottumwa, Iowa, who keeps tabs — almost minute by minute — on high scorers at arcade games all over the country. His name is Walt Day, and he's the director of the Twin Galaxies Official International Scoreboard.

Walt makes his living by selling ice cream and making change at the Twin Galaxies Entertainment Center. While

ask Walt the highest score ever recorded for QIX, and he'll rattle off the number 359,556. That was chalked up by Ben Goldenberg. He

(515) 684-6421. If it's a normal day, expect a busy signal. The day I telephoned him I was one of forty or fifty callers. So keep trying.

"...QIX score: 359,556 points"

did it at the Silver Bowl Arcade in Berkeley, California, on May 5, 1982.

Other record scores that Walt has verified include:

Game	Score
ALPINE SKI	174,000
BOSCONIAN	185,000
CENTPEDE	4,421,232
DONKEY KONG	268,000
KICKMAN	4,642,920
MISSILE COMMAND	60,220,510
MOUSETRAP	30,314,000
MS PAC MAN	130,300
OMEGA RACE	600,700
PAC-MAN	5,579,350
SPACE INVADERS	150,880
STARGATE	15,926,075
TEMPEST	828,453

"...DEFENDER score: 15,936,100 points"

he's doing this, he handles phone calls from all over the U.S. The callers are reporting scoring records.

If you want to report a record, or just to find out the latest high score for a particular game, call Walt Day at

Day's statistics are reported in newspapers and on television and radio. They also appear in several video game magazines. "But by the time the magazines are published," he says, "the scores are out of date."

"For example, the September issue of *JoyStik* reported the high score for DEFENDER to be 33,013,200. Well, by the time the magazine hit the newsstands, that record had been broken four or five times. It's over 50,000,000 now."

Remember Steve Jurazek? He was the young man hailed by *Time* magazine for setting the all-time DEFENDER record — 15,936,100 points.

According to Walt, that isn't much of an achievement any

more. "Juraszek," he says, "is now somewhere between fiftieth and sixtieth on the all-time DEFENDER list."

Walt recently supervised

"...MAKE TRAX score: 1,508,310 points"

the construction of a huge electronic scoreboard that keeps an up-to-the-minute account of all scoring records. There wasn't much room for the board at the Twin Galaxies arcade in Ottuma. So it was set up at another Twin Galaxies, in Kirksville, Missouri.

But Walt considers the Ottuma arcade to be the international high-score headquarters. "It's hard to believe," he says, "that Ottuma, Iowa, could become the video game capital of the world. But that's exactly what has happened."

How did Ottuma become the video game capital? How did Walt get to be the dean of high scores? It began a couple of years ago.

"One day," Walt explains, "I was working behind the counter at Twin Galaxies. Someone playing DEFENDER ran up a high score of about 24,000,000 points. We

"...MS PAC-MAN score: 130,300 points"

thought it might be an all-time record, so we started calling up other arcades to ask. But no one seemed to know if it was the high mark.

"So we decided to call it the official record until we heard otherwise. We did the same thing for other games. The

next thing we knew, people were calling to report other records, or to find out the record score for a particular game. We were on our way to

becoming a national institution."

Shortly after that, something else started happening. People started coming from every part of the country just

"...DONKEY KONG score: 398,000"



Walt Day, manager of the Twin Galaxies Entertainment Center.

to play the games at Twin Galaxies.

"We're like the Yankee Stadium of video game arcades," Walt says. "People want to be able to say that they've visited here."

Where are the best video arcade players in America? According to Walt's figures, they're either in North Carolina or in California. "Those two states have the most record holders," he says.

How about the greatest single scoring achievement?

As far as Walt is concerned, that distinction belongs to a handful of determined ROBOTRON players.

ROBOTRON is a sci-fi nightmare where the screen blazes with action. Sinister robots have wiped out all of humanity except for you, your parents, and your kid brother. You must destroy the robots before they get your family. It takes hours of practice to train your mind to deal with

the weird creatures you must face in the game.

"Recently," Walt says, "I've had reports from three or four different players who have scored over a million points in ROBOTRON. That means they had to play the game for 27 or 28 hours! Can you imagine playing a game like ROBOTRON for that long? You'd be like a wet dishrag!"

For his own enjoyment, Walt prefers much gentler games. MAKE TRAX is one of his favorites. In that game, you're a paint brush painting a maze while two fish are chasing you. Walt himself holds the MAKE TRAX scoring record - a whopping 1,508,310.

"I admire kids who do well playing a particular game," Walt says. "Mastering a game takes a lot more than just good eye-hand coordination. Understanding is just as important. It takes a good, alert mind to beat a video game."

"And practice," Walt adds. "Lots and lots of practice."

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THE CLUBHOUSE



Do you know about the "Save the Chicken Foundation"? It's a club for high scorers in FREEWAY, a home video game from Activision.

In FREEWAY, a chicken stands on one side of a 10-lane highway. The road is throbbing with fast cars and big trucks going in both directions. Engines roar and horns beep.

Using a joystick, it's your job to get the chick safely across the highway.

This is no easy task, especially since the game has a built-in timer. But 15-year-old Thomas Russell DeWolfe of Arlington, Texas, has sharpened his skills at FREEWAY. He's managed to get the chicken across the highway a record 34 times in one game.

That makes Tommy the No. 1 member of the "Save the Chicken Foundation," one of several Activision clubs. To be admitted to the Foundation, you have to get the chicken across the highway at least 20 times in a game. At last count, the Foundation had about 1,200 members.

Tommy's name is familiar to readers of Activisions, a magazine published four times a year by Activision, Inc. The magazine also keeps readers posted on other Activision clubs, including the Federation of Laser Blasters (7,000 members); the Activision Ski Team (2,300); and the World Class Dragster Club (3,500).

Activision is one of the four companies that provide special publications for users of their home games. The names and addresses of these companies are listed at the bottom of this page.

Atari Age is free to anyone who has bought an Atari home system. The editor promises "advance information on upcoming cartridges, tips for improved performance, and news about competitions and other special events."

One recent issue featured an interview with Pac-Man. (The game is now available as an Atari cartridge.) In the interview, the little fellow revealed that he's putting the finishing touches on his autobiography. It's called Dot's Life.

Asked to name his all-time favorite baseball player, the Pac replied, "Willy Maze." It was that kind of interview.

Atari Age invites club members to take part in a special contest in each issue. One recent contest involved code cracking. Another took the form of a scavenger hunt. The magazine also offers for sale several items that carry the Atari logo—key rings, backpacks, digital watches, and the like.

Odyssey Adventure comes to *Odyssey* owners for \$3.00 a year. The magazine reports high scores for the most popular *Odyssey* games and keeps readers up to date on new cartridges. One recent issue announced a contest in which one of the prizes was a pound of gold.

If you have a Coleco system, there's no magazine for you yet. But a company spokesman said it's in the planning stages. As soon as we hear about it, we'll let you know.

For more information on clubs and magazines, write to these addresses:

The Atari Club
1700 Walnut St.
Philadelphia,
PA 19103

Activisions
Activision, Inc.
2350 Bayshore Frontage Road
Mountain View,
CA 94043

Odyssey Adventure
Coco Publishing Co.
30400 Van Dyke Blvd.
Warren,
MI 48093

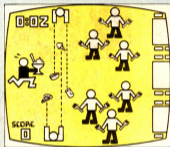
Intellivision Game Club
P.O. Box 4910
Burlingame,
CA 94010

VIDEO

We have dozens of great ideas for video games. We've been sending them to manufacturers for months now, but, for some reason, no one takes us seriously.

It looks like a conspiracy to us. So we've decided to let you judge for yourself just how great our ideas really are. Take a look at two of the...

GAMES WE'LL NEVER SEE

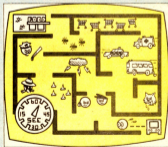


PUDDING DEFENDER:

You're in the school cafeteria, and there's only one chocolate pudding left. You want it, but so does everybody else in the place. Fight them all off and get safely to a table to win the game.



BOOB TUBE: You're watching TV, and your mother says she needs maraschino cherries and worcestershire sauce for dinner. A commercial comes on – and the timer begins a countdown. Dodge traffic, dogs, and little kids to reach the store, make the purchases, and get back before the commercial break ends.





We thought we should do something really special for our premier issue. So we went ahead and invented a whole new category of jokes.

We call them *Jokes That Are So Bad, No One Would Ever Repeat Them*. Here are our first three entries in the category.

Q: How do you keep Krytolians from charging in **MISSILE COMMAND**?

A: Take away their credit cards.

Q: What happened when the Atari delivery truck was in an accident?

A: DE-FENDER got dented.

Q: What do you do when your suitcase pops open in the **LOST LUGGAGE** game?

A: Pack, Man!



A BLIP OF THE TONGUE

What's a good name for...

...a barbershop with video games?

SNIP AND BLIP

...a soda fountain with video games?

SIP AND BLIP

...an amusement park with trampolines and video games?

FLIP AND BLIP

...an arcade that serves snack food?

CHIPS AND BLIPS

...a side dish at Chips and Blips?

BLIP DIP

...someone who can't talk about anything but video games?

BLIP DRIP

...the mistake you make when you lose a video game?

BLIP SLIP

...a joystick?

BLIP GRIP

PLAYER'S CHOICE

PITFALL

Imagine that you're a video game programmer. The boss comes to you and says, "DONKEY KONG is the runaway best-seller of the year. Take the DONKEY KONG idea and run with it. I want something similar, but different."

Similar-but-different is what most game companies are always trying to come up with. Usually, they settle for similar, and we get pale imitations of our favorite games.

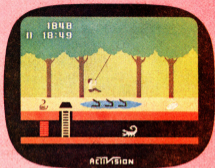
But once in a while, they succeed. In that case, what starts as an imitation of a popular game ends up opening new territory of its own. A current success of that kind comes from Activision. It's called PITFALL.

PITFALL has a lot in common with DONKEY KONG. The hero does a lot of running. He has to avoid a series of rolling logs by jumping over them. And he has to do a good deal of leaping over open spaces.

But the similarities end quickly, since PITFALL calls for a whole series of skills not needed in DONKEY KONG.

Harry, the hero, is running through a wooded area in search of treasure. The logs rolling in his direction are the least of his worries. He also has to leap over holes in the ground, swing on a vine over a deadly swamp, and make his way across a body of water that houses three hungry crocodiles.

The vine swings back and forth over the swamp and calls for careful timing at both ends. As it swings toward you,



there's only one position at which you can successfully leap forward and grab it.

The vine carries you across the swamp. Once again, there's only one position at which you can let go, drop down, and land on safe ground. Time it wrong at either end and Harry loses his life. (A game is made up of three lives for Harry.)

The crocodiles require split-second timing even more difficult than the vine. The three man-eaters keep opening and closing their jaws, and you can get across only while the jaws are closed.

If you stand at the water's edge and count, you'll see that the jaws remain closed for just slightly less than three seconds.

That's how much time you have to hop along the three heads to the safety of the other side. That means less than three seconds for four hops — one onto each crocodile, and the fourth one onto dry land.

The only way to succeed is to begin the first hop just *before* the mouths close. As they snap shut, you'll land on the head of the first crocodile. That will only happen, of course, if your jump was timed perfectly.

If Harry fails to leap across one of the holes, he winds up underground, where he can travel a lot faster through a tunnel. The trouble is, there's an unending series of deadly scorpions down there. The scorpions are a lot harder to leap over than the holes above ground.

In addition to all this, Harry also has to face snakes and fires, but he has a chance to capture as many as 32 treasures. The game has a timer, but since it's set at 20 minutes, you're much more likely to run out of lives than time.

PITFALL may have been inspired by DONKEY KONG, but this is one case where inspiration didn't lead to imitation. PITFALL is its own game.

It's also a heck of a lot of fun.

ARCADIA-2001

Atari still ranks as Leader of the Pack, but new competitors crop up every time you turn around. Emerson Radio has just joined the race to get a chunk of the video game market.

Emerson's game system is called ARCADIA-2001, and it has at least two important things going for it. The first is price.

If you have unlimited funds, you can spend as much as \$300 for a video game console. We're not talking about a home computer. Some of those go for *less than* \$300. We're talking about a system that offers only video game capability.

If dollars mean something to you, though, ARCADIA-2001 may be what

you're looking for. If you shop around, you can get it for as little as \$100. That could make it an important competitor to the big names in video game consoles.

The second thing ARCADIA-2001 has going for it is the design of its controls. The designers knew that some game players prefer the joystick that comes with Atari and Odyssey, and that some prefer the rotating disc used by Intellivision.

The controls come with a built-in disc for those who like the Intellivision approach. But they also include a *removable* joystick that can be screwed on or off in a few seconds.

That means you can shift from disc to joystick for different games, using whichever control works best for you in each game. It also means that two players in the same game can use two different kinds of controls.

Screen graphics for ARCADIA are at least as good as you've come to expect from the big-name companies. At last count, 30 game cartridges were available, with more to come soon.

As you might expect, the cartridges include football, baseball, soccer, tennis, and several space games. What you won't find in the selection is any of the well-known arcade games, like PAC-MAN or DONKEY KONG.

So, if you're in the market for a home game system, consider ARCADIA-2001. The hand controls are a plus; the lack of well-known games is a minus.

The price, though, is going to be hard to beat.



*continues
on next page*

DIG DUG



At the Whistle-Stop Family Entertainment Center, the lively and sprawling game arcade in New York's Penn Station, you sometimes have to line up to play the more popular games — PAC-MAN, MS. PAC-MAN, CENTIPEDE, and DONKEY KONG. Because the arcade offers several of each of these machines, the wait is seldom a long one.

In recent weeks, customers at the Whistle Stop have been lining up to play another game. It's DIG DUG. Atari manufactures and distributes the game. They're fond of saying, "People dig DIG DUG."

Dig Dug also happens to be the name of the game's hero. He's a determined little guy who wears a miner's cap and a fixed expression as he tunnels through several layers of multi-colored earth. By so doing, Dig Dug creates an under-

ground maze.

As Dig Dug tunnels, two enemies pursue him. There's Fygar, a fierce, fire-belching dragon, and Pooka, a creature that looks like a red beachball wearing sun goggles. If either Fygar or Pooka makes contact with Dig Dug, he's done for.

Dig Dug isn't quite as empty-headed as he seems to be at first glance. In fact, he has a few tricks up his sleeve. He is able to tunnel beneath an underground boulder, causing it to come crashing down on an enemy.

He's also equipped with an air pump and a long hose which he uses to either stun or pump up the bad guys. He can keep pumping until they explode.

The game's control system is simple. There's a single four-directional joystick that sends Dig Dug north, south, east or

west. There's also a pump button. You press it to stun a monster, and hold it down to explode him.

DIG DUG is one of the few games to recognize that the world is made up of left-handers as well as right-handers. There are actually two pump buttons, one on each side of the joystick. A leftie can work the joystick with the left hand, and the pump button with the right.

When you're successful in clearing a board of all the monsters, another board pops up, and you begin again. With each board you complete, the game gets harder and harder, with Dig Dug and the monsters moving at faster and faster speeds. You're forced to make decisions faster, and there's a greater chance you'll make a game-ending mistake.

What seems to first attract players to DIG DUG is its resemblance to PAC-MAN. There are no enemy aliens, no sinister robots. There are no warp buttons or hyperspace buttons. It has nothing to do with war or outerspace. Dig Dug simply tries to outwit the monsters before they do him in. It's the PAC-MAN scenario all over again.

There are other similarities. The DIG DUG monsters move ghoulishly about, floating through the soil layers in random fashion. PAC-MAN monsters move in much the same way.

The joystick control is the same. The scoring system, with points awarded for devouring monsters, is the same.

Some enthusiasts prefer DIG DUG to PAC-MAN. "It's like PAC-MAN," says one, "but it's more interesting. Besides the joystick, you have the pump button. That helps to make DIG DUG more challenging."

Other players complain about the joystick used in DIG DUG. "It's not like the joystick in PAC-MAN," says one critic, "which moves Pac-Man instantly in whichever direction you want him to go. In DIG DUG, there's a pause. After you move the joystick, you have to wait a split second before Dig Dug begins to move.

It takes time to get used to that. I wish the joystick was quicker."

It's not difficult to do well at DIG DUG right from the beginning. This is another reason for the game's wide appeal. "You don't have to worry about a lot of different kinds of boards, like in TEMPEST," said one player. "You don't have to be able to manipulate a Trak Ball, like in CENTIPEDE. It's not like QIX, which requires pouring several dollars worth of quarters into the machine before you begin to score well. The first time I played DIG DUG, I got to the third board. That puffs you up."

This may suggest one of the game's drawbacks. If you're a top level player, someone who feels at home behind the controls of STARGATE or ROBOTRON, you may doze a bit when playing DIG DUG.

Novice players usually get through several boards and achieve scores between 5,000 and 10,000. Good players score between 25,000 and 50,000, and experts over 150,000.

None of these standards really matters to one 16-year old who's a DIG DUG fan, even though MS. PAC-MAN is her favorite game. "I like DIG DUG," she says, "because it's the only game in which I can get my initials onto the high-score board."

When DIG DUG comes to your neighborhood, as it's sure to do, be certain you watch someone else play it before you try. Watch four or five games. Learn how the controls work. Watch how the monsters move. Notice what achievements lead to the highest scores. For example, the deeper the level you're at when you zap a monster, the more points you'll get.

Here's a tip that may save you a quarter or two. Dig Dug can't move when he's looking to blow up and pop an enemy. So never attempt to pump up one monster when there's another nearby. You'll be a goner. When a monster gets close, release the pump button and flee.

A PIP OF A CHIP

There's a new computer chip on the market that may soon affect the way video games are designed. The chip could make it possible for you to add features to a game that isn't quite what you want it to be.

The chip now used in a video game system holds thousands of pieces of information. The computer uses this information to fill your TV screen and to react to what you do with the controls.

These pieces of information are entered permanently onto the chip. You can't change them, erase them, or add to them.

Another kind of computer chip does allow you to enter your own instructions. That's what makes it possible for you to write a computer program. But if you want to save that program, you have to put it on tape or a disc. When you turn the computer off, your chip forgets everything you programmed into its memory.

Recently, a California company began marketing a third kind of chip. It will accept information that you program into it. And the information won't be erased when you turn the machine off.

What does that mean to you? Well, suppose you have a home computer and a game involving enemy aliens. Let's say you want to reduce the number of aliens, but increase the speed of their attack.

Let's say your computer includes the new kind of chip we've just described. The game instructions would include information on how to change the game's pro-

gram. And the changes you made would be permanent — until you decided to change them again.

With this chip, video games could turn all of us into programmers some day.

SCHOLAR-BLIPS

You've heard the complaints about how dangerous video games can be for young people. Everyone in the video game business has heard them, too. We know of at least one arcade owner who has taken steps to neutralize the complaints.

The arcade has a sign at the entrance, intended to encourage the customers to pay attention to their school work. It tells players to bring in their report cards at the end of the school year.

For every "A" on your card, you get two free games from the owner. A "B" earns you one free game. With grades lower than "B", you have to pay your own way.

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Question: When is a video game not a video game?

Answer: When its purpose is to train you to deal with real life-and-death situations.

The Pentagon is looking for some video "games" that do just that. They've approached several games companies about designing programs for pilot training.

We'll keep you posted on any developments that come from this plan. In the meantime, you can use the Pentagon as an excuse for all the time you spend with video games.

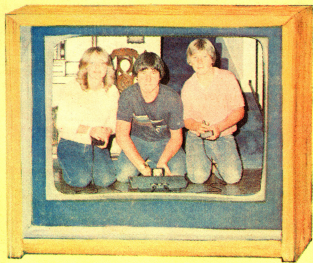
Just tell anyone who asks that you're training to be a pilot.

SCOTTIE in *Cracker Jack* story



Crunchy caramel-coated popcorn and peanuts and a secret toy surprise!

HOW TO DESIGN A VIDEO GAME: YOU TELL US!



You've played plenty of video games, and you know about dozens more that you've never even seen. If you become a regular reader of BLIP, you'll have a good idea of what's coming up in the future.

But how about what isn't coming up? How about the games nobody has thought of yet?

We're willing to bet that you have some terrific ideas on the subject. We figure nobody knows more about what video games could be than the people who play them.

That's why we want you to write to

us. We want to know what you'd do if you were working for a video games company. We want to see the kinds of games you'd design if you had the chance.

We'll pick the five best ideas we receive, and the five designers will be paid off in two ways. They'll see their games featured in a future issue of BLIP. And they'll each get a check for \$50.00.

BLIP is interested only in publishing your idea. If a game company likes what you've come up with, all rights to the design will belong to you.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

1 Print or type an explanation of exactly how your game is played. We don't have any minimum length in mind for this explanation, but it will have to include *at least* the following information:

- the number of players
- the situation the players are in
- the object of the game
- the things that change (if any) as the game goes on
- the differences (if any) between one difficulty level and another
- the way the game is scored
- the way the game ends

2 *If you want to*, you can include a drawing of what will appear on the screen. This is NOT necessary, and it won't improve your chances of being published. But you might feel more comfortable showing us what you've invented, as well as telling us about it.

3 Try to be as original as you can. We already have more SPACE INVADERS imitations than we need. And a creature that runs a maze and gobbles little things is PAC-MAN, even if you change its shape and its name.

4 Try to think like the designer of a game that has to appeal to the public. That may mean putting your special interests aside, in favor of something people are likely to spend money on. But it may also improve your chances of being published.

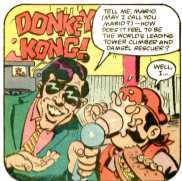
5 Mail your entry to the address below. **IMPORTANT:** We cannot return any part of any entry. If you draw a picture and you don't want to part with it, send us a photocopy of the picture.

BLIP Talent Search
Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10016

All entries must be postmarked no later than March 1, 1983. All entries become the property of Marvel Comics. The five winning entries will be published in a future issue of BLIP.



THIS IS YOUR IN-DEPTH REPORTER MC WEDD HERE, WITH MARIO THE CARPENTER FOR A HARD-HITTING INTERVIEW ON THE SET OF...



DONKEY KONG!

TELL ME, MARIO (MAY I CALL YOU MARIO?) --HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE WORLD'S LEADING TOWER CLIMBER AND DAMPEL RESCUER?

WELL, I...



OR IS THERE A DIFFERENT SORT OF MAN BEHIND THAT POWERFUL PUBLIC FACADE? WHICH IS THE REAL MARIO THE CARPENTER?

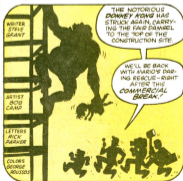
WELL, I...



EEK!

WHOOOPS! GOTTA GO!

THIS IS EXCITING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!



WRITER
STEVE GRANT

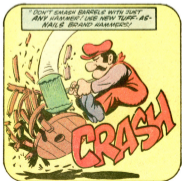
ARTIST
BOB CAMP

LETTERS
RICK ARNER

COLORS
GEORGE ROUSSOS

THE NOTORIOUS **DONKEY KONG** HAS STRUCK AGAIN, CARRYING THE FAIR DAMPEL TO THE TOP OF THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

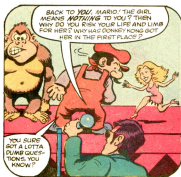
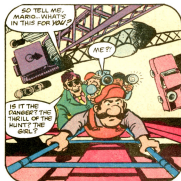
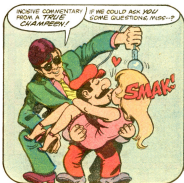
WE'LL BE BACK WITH MARIO'S DARING RESCUE -- RIGHT AFTER THIS COMMERCIAL BREAK!

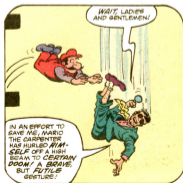
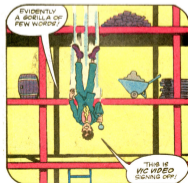
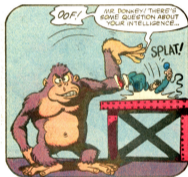
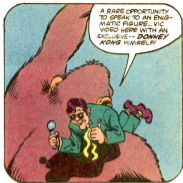
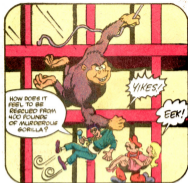


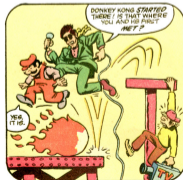
"DON'T SMASH BARRELS WITH JUST ANY HAMMER! USE NEW TURF-AS-NAILS BRAND HAMMERS!"

CRASH

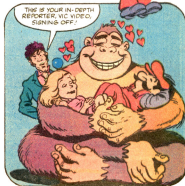
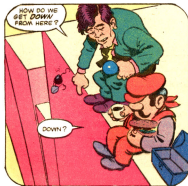
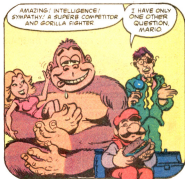
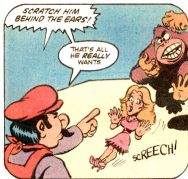
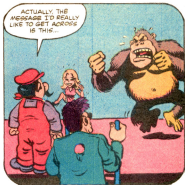
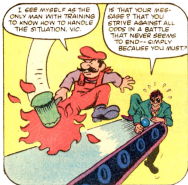
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BLIP SURVEY

We want to know who you are, what kind of things you like, and – most important, what you think of this first issue of BLIP. For giving us this information, some lucky reader is going to get a reward.

To get your shot at the reward, fill out this page and send it to us. Or give us the same information on an 8½" x 11" piece of paper.

After we've read the responses, we'll pick one at random. That reader will get to choose any one of the following:

- Four cartridges for any home video games system
- Two hand-held video games
- A TIMEX computer that can be hooked up to your TV set

What are you waiting for? Go get a pencil!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

AGE _____ BOY OR GIRL? _____

Which three features in this issue did you like most?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which three features in this issue did you like least?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Do you own a home video games system?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you do, what brand is it?

Do you play video games in stores or arcades?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you do, about how much do you spend each week on the machines?

If you have some favorite coin-operated games, please list them.

If you have some favorite home cartridges, please list them.

How much time do you spend each week watching TV?

About _____ hours

What are your favorite TV shows?

How much time do you spend each week listening to the radio?

About _____ hours



How much time do you spend each week listening to records or tapes?

About _____ hours

How much time do you spend each week playing video games – either at home or in stores or arcades?

About _____ hours

How many times do you go to the movies each month? _____

How many video game cartridges do you own?

Who in your family decides whether or not to buy a new cartridge?

If someone other than you decides, how much influence do you have on the decision?

____None ____A little ____A lot

How much spending money do you have each week? \$_____

Besides you, how many other people will read your copy of BLIP?

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Brothers _____

Friends _____

Parents _____

Relatives _____

If you have brothers or sisters, what are their ages?

Brothers _____

Sisters _____

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____Yes ____No

Please check each kind of ad you would like to see in BLIP.

____video games

____snack foods

____records and tapes

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____clothing

____other (please specify)

What topics would you like to read about in future issues of BLIP?

Put your answers in an envelope and mail them to us. **NOTE:** Please don't put anything else in the envelope except this survey. If you do, you won't have a chance for the reward.

Here's the address:

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**Atari Video
Computer System**